

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION AT DAYTON

ANTHONY WILLIAMS,

Plaintiff,

:

Case No. 3:06-cv-229

-vs-

District Judge Walter Herbert Rice
Chief Magistrate Judge Michael R. Merz

:

GENE FISCHER, et al.,

Defendants.

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON DEFENDANT DAY'S MOTION FOR
SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

This case is before the Court on Motion to Dismiss of Defendant Wade Day (Doc. No. 35). Plaintiff was notified of his obligation to respond to this Motion not later than January 22, 2007 (Order to Pro Se Plaintiff, Doc. No. 38), but has not responded as of the date of this Report.

The Motion to Dismiss was made under Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6) whose purpose is to allow a defendant to test whether, as a matter of law, the plaintiff is entitled to legal relief even if everything alleged in the complaint is true. *Mayer v. Mylod*, 988 F.2d 635, 638 (6th Cir. 1993), citing *Nishiyama v. Dickson County, Tennessee*, 814 F.2d 277, 279 (6th Cir. 1987). Put another way, "The purpose of a motion under Rule 12(b)(6) is to test the formal sufficiency of the statement of the claim for relief; it is not a procedure for resolving a contest about the facts or merits of the case." Wright & Miller, *FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE: Civil* 2d §1356 at 294 (1990).

The test for dismissal under Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6) is a stringent one:

[A] complaint should not be dismissed for failure to state a claim unless it appears beyond doubt that the plaintiff can prove no set of facts in support of his claim which would entitle him to relief.

Hartford Fire Ins. Co. v. California, 509 U.S. 764, 811, 113 S. Ct. 2891, 125 L. Ed. 2d 612 (1993),

quoting *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41, 45-46, 78 S. Ct. 99, 2 L. Ed. 2d 80 (1957); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 109 S. Ct. 1827, 104 L. Ed. 2d 338 (1989); *Hishon v. King & Spalding*, 467 U.S. 69, 104 S. Ct. 229, 81 L. Ed. 2d 59(1984); *Monette v. Electronic Data Systems, Inc.*, 90 F.3d 1173, 1189 (6th Cir. 1996). For purposes of the motion to dismiss, the complaint must be construed in the light most favorable to the plaintiff and its allegations taken as true. *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 94 S. Ct. 1683, 40 L. Ed. 2d 90 (1974); *Westlake v. Lucas*, 537 F.2d 857 (6th Cir. 1976); *Craighead v. E.F. Hutton & Co.*, 899 F.2d 485 (6th Cir. 1990). A *pro se* litigant is entitled to liberal construction of his pleadings. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972). To survive a motion to dismiss under Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6), “a ... complaint must contain either direct or inferential allegations respecting all the material elements to sustain a recovery under *some* viable legal theory.” *Scheid v. Fanny Farmer Candy Shops, Inc.*, 859 F.2d 434, 436 (6th Cir. 1988); *followed Allard v. Weitzman (In re DeLorean Motor Co.)*, 991 F.2d 1236 (6th Cir, 1990); *Columbia Natural Resources, Inc. v. Tatum*, 58 F.3d 1101 (6th Cir. 1995). The Court “need not accept as true legal conclusions or unwarranted factual inferences.” *Morgan v. Church’s Fried Chicken*, 829 F.2d 10, 12 (6th Cir. 1987). Bare assertions of legal conclusions are not sufficient. *Lillard v. Shelby County Bd. of Educ.*, 76 F.3d 716, 726 (6th Cir. 1996); *Sogevalor S.A. v. Penn Central Corp.*, 771 F. Supp. 890, 893 (S.D. Ohio 1991). It is only well-pleaded facts which are construed liberally in favor of the party opposing the motion to dismiss. *Id.*, citing *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 236, 94 S. Ct. 1683, 40 L. Ed. 2d 90 (1974); see also Wright & Miller, FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE: Civil 2d §1357 at 311-318 (1990).

In the absence of a memorandum from Plaintiff, the Court declines to decide whether the physical injuries he alleges – weight loss, abdominal pain, and other symptoms of food poisoning – constitute sufficient physical injury to satisfy the requirements of the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 Title VIII of P.L. 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321(effective April 26, 1996)(the "PLRA").

Rather, the Court focuses on the second asserted ground of dismissal, Mr. Day's claim of qualified immunity.

Government officials performing discretionary functions are afforded a qualified immunity under 42 U.S.C. §1983 as long as their conduct "does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known." *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800, 102 S. Ct. 2727, 73 L. Ed. 2d 396 (1982); *Christophel v. Kukulinsky*, 61 F.3d 479, 484 (6th Cir. 1995); *Adams v. Metiva*, 31 F.3d 375, 386 (6th Cir., 1994); *Flatford v. City of Monroe*, 17 F.3d 162 (6th Cir. 1994). The question is not the subjective good or bad faith of the public official, but the "objective legal reasonableness" of his or her action in light of clearly established law at the time the official acted. *Anderson v. Creighton*, 483, U.S. 635, 107 S. Ct. 3034, 97 L. Ed. 2d 523 (1987).

Qualified immunity analysis involves three inquiries: (i) "whether, based upon the applicable law, the facts viewed in the light most favorable to the plaintiffs show that a constitutional violation has occurred;" (ii) "whether the violation involved a clearly established constitutional right of which a reasonable person would have known;" and (iii) "whether the plaintiff has offered sufficient evidence to indicate that what the official allegedly did was objectively unreasonable in light of the clearly established constitutional rights." *Radvansky v. City of Olmsted Falls*, 395 F.3d 291, 302 (6th Cir. 2005), quoting *Feathers v. Aey*, 319 F.3d 843, 848 (6th Cir. 2003). Qualified immunity must be granted if the plaintiff cannot establish each of these elements. *Williams ex rel. Allen v. Cambridge Bd. of Educ.*, 370 F.3d 630, 636 (6th Cir. 2004).

In order for the violated right to be clearly established, the contours of the right must be sufficiently clear that a reasonable official would understand that what he or she is doing violates that right; in light of pre-existing law, the unlawfulness of the official's action must be apparent. *Anderson v. Creighton*, 483 U.S. at 640. The right must be defined at the appropriate level of specificity to determine whether it was clearly established at the time the defendants acted. *Wilson*

v. Layne, 526 U.S. 603, 615 (1999), citing *Anderson v. Creighton*. The test is whether the law was clear in relation to the specific facts confronting the public official when he acted; the constitutional right must not be characterized too broadly without considering the specific facts of the case. *Guercio v. Brody*, 911 F.2d 1179 (6th Cir. 1990). The contours of the right must be sufficiently clear that a reasonable official would understand that what he is doing violates that right. *Russo v. City of Cincinnati*, 953 F.2d 1036, 1042 (6th Cir. 1992). Although the very action in question need not have previously been held unlawful, its unlawfulness must be apparent in light of pre-existing law. *Id.* An action's unlawfulness can be apparent from direct holdings, specific examples described as prohibited, or from the general reasoning that a court employs. *Burchett v. Kiefer*, 310 F.3d 937 (6th Cir. 2002), citing *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 122 S.Ct. 2508, 2516-17, 153 L.Ed.2d 666 (2002).

Plaintiff has failed to establish that the jail conditions of which he complains violate clearly established federal law. Defendant Day is therefore entitled to summary judgment on his qualified immunity defense.

It is therefore respectfully recommended that the Complaint herein be dismissed with prejudice as to Defendant Day.

February 14, 2007.

s/ **Michael R. Merz**
Chief United States Magistrate Judge

NOTICE REGARDING OBJECTIONS

Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b), any party may serve and file specific, written objections to the proposed findings and recommendations within ten days after being served with this Report and Recommendations. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(e), this period is automatically extended to thirteen days (excluding intervening Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) because this Report is being served by one of the methods of service listed in Fed. R. Civ. P. 5(b)(2)(B), (C), or (D) and may be extended further by the Court on timely motion for an extension. Such objections shall specify the portions of the Report objected to and shall be accompanied by a memorandum of

law in support of the objections. If the Report and Recommendations are based in whole or in part upon matters occurring of record at an oral hearing, the objecting party shall promptly arrange for the transcription of the record, or such portions of it as all parties may agree upon or the Magistrate Judge deems sufficient, unless the assigned District Judge otherwise directs. A party may respond to another party's objections within ten days after being served with a copy thereof. Failure to make objections in accordance with this procedure may forfeit rights on appeal. *See United States v. Walters*, 638 F. 2d 947 (6th Cir., 1981); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140, 106 S. Ct. 466, 88 L. Ed. 2d 435 (1985).